

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 2-4 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wolf.

With respect to the claimed ratio of rounded surface radii of curvature of the external surface of coupling and that of the rounded internal surface of the links, the Examiner contends that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection based on the following comments. While it may be true that a relative movement between the chain link and the chain pin is “inherent” in the prior art, the Examiner himself states that the prior art contains not even a rudimentary reference to the concepts presented in the claims 2 and 9.

Based on the absence of information in the prior art, the Examiner draws the conclusion that a person skilled in the art would find it obvious to come up with an arrangement like the present invention. If one were to follow the reasoning of the Examiner, none of the geometric features of chains of this type could be called novel because according to the Examiner they would have become obvious as soon as someone had “invented” that a chain can be brought from a stretched-out condition into a curved condition, due to the presence of chain links.



or constant radii of curvature and the reference clearly does not explicitly recite that the radii of curvature is not uniform and that instead it varies over its length. Since this feature is clearly not disclosed or suggested in the cited reference, new claim 14 should be passed to issue.

Claim 15 recites a link chain in which at least some of the plates have elongated windows with end sections for the respective coupling elements. The window also has an intermediate section that is provided between the two end sections. The windows are shaped to prevent displacement of the coupling units from the respective end sections into the intermediate section. In the Wolf reference, there is merely an opening (e.g., circular opening) that receives the coupling elements.

In other words, the "window" or opening of Wolf does not have the shape of the window recited in claim 15 since the Wolf window does not contain end sections where the coupling elements are located and retained by means of the window shape. In particular, the shape of the window is such that the coupling elements that are received in the end sections are prevented from traveling or moving into the intermediate section. Claim 16 further describes the shape of the window and the feature that prevents movement of the coupling elements from the end sections to the intermediation section. More specifically, claim 16 recites that the plate includes projections that extend into a respective elongate window and define the end sections and in part define the radius of curvature of the rounded internal surface. Once again, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited Wolf reference does not include these features since it once again merely teaches providing an opening into which the pins are disposed as opposed to forming projections that extend into the window so as to partition the window into the end sections that receive and retain the coupling elements as is clearly shown in the drawing figures and described in the present specification. The surface that includes the claimed radii of curvature is in part defined by the projection that extends into the window. Such a feature is completely absent in the cited reference.

Since these features are neither described nor suggested in any way in the Wolf reference, newly added claims 15 and 16 should be passed allowed and passed to issue.

**Docket No.: 03191/100I394-US1**

Dated: January 23, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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